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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-JAPAN RELATIONS, SECRETARY OF  
STATE CLINTON'S POLICY ON TAIWAN

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused March 4 news coverage on the Taipei District Court's decision to extend former President Chen Shui-bian's detention; on former First Lady Wu Shu-chen's appearance in a pre-trial hearing; and on the controversy surrounding Ma Ying-jeou administration's insistence on signing an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" criticized a suggestion proposed by George Washington University Professor David Shambaugh of holding a summit among the United States, China and Japan. The column said the three countries have their own interests and concerns in different issues, such as the North Korea nuclear issue, Iran, Afghanistan, the global financial crisis and the Sino-U.S. historical complex. It is difficult to make the three countries cooperate because it is impossible to accommodate the three's interests. An op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" criticized United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for lacking "her predecessors' experience or gravitas." The op-ed made allegations based on sources in the State Department, that Clinton realized she "screwed up" by making remarks suggesting that she dismissed the need to push Taiwan issues during her visit to China. End summary.

### 13. U.S.-China-Japan Relations

"A Mechanism for Trilateral Negotiation among the United States, China and Japan Is Imagination"

The "International Lookout" column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 150,000] wrote:

"Professor David Shambaugh of the United States' George Washington University once suggested to the United States government that the Obama Administration consider holding a summit among the United States, China and Japan once every one or two years. The purpose [of the summit] would be to establish a mechanism of trilateral negotiation. The concept is not bad, and would be helpful in stabilizing the situation in Asia. However, it is something very difficult to achieve because the three countries have their own vital interests, which are impossible to accommodate jointly. Thus it is difficult [for the three countries] to cooperate seriously.  
...

"It may well be asked that when the leaders of the three parties sit together to discuss Asian issues, what issues are they going to talk about? [Are they going to talk about] the Taiwan issue? The Diaoyutai issue? The Korean Peninsula issue? The East China Sea issue? Japan's 'Northern Territory' issue? The South China Sea issue? Do the three parties have common interests among these issues? In the last few days, the positions that China and Japan took on the Diaoyutai Islands and the United States' ambiguous attitude are ample proof of this."

### 14. Secretary of State Clinton's Policy on Taiwan

## "Watching and Waiting for Hillary"

Charles Snyder, a former Washington correspondent for the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," opined in the "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (3/4):

"US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has a big mouth, and she has put her foot in it many times over the years. She did it again last month when she dismissed the need to push Taiwan issues during her maiden voyage to Beijing as the US' top diplomat.

"Speaking to reporters in Seoul just before she flew to China, Clinton made it clear that Taiwan, along with Tibet and China's human rights violations generally, would be lost in the shuffle as she and Chinese leaders talked about other things.

"She would not press China on Taiwan and the other areas of disagreement between Washington and Beijing because 'we pretty much know what they're going to say,' she told the reporters traveling with her around East Asia.

"We know what they're going to say because I've had those conversations for more than a decade with Chinese leaders, and we know what they're going to say about Taiwan and military sales, and they know what we're going to say,' she said. ...

"Former secretaries of state Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell also knew what China would say about Taiwan during their meetings, but they never dismissed Taiwan's interests and security publicly because of that. To do so, they well knew, would be interpreted by the Chinese leaders as signals of backsliding on Taiwan, which could be used in Beijing's propaganda against Taipei.

"But Clinton does not have either of her predecessors' experience or gravitas. She is, after all, a politician who is a novice at the international diplomacy game. She was chosen by US President Barack Obama as much for her political clout, especially among women's groups, as for her global issues skills.

"We are told by sources with insights into the State Department's East Asia bureau that after she uttered her remarks and they were reported in the media, Clinton immediately realized that she screwed up, to borrow Obama's expression. She did not mean to belittle Taiwan or leave Taiwan to the wolves, department officials have said to others.

"She did not mean 'Who cares?' about Taiwan, Tibet or human rights, they said. They added that her comments were parallel to her statements during the trip that economic sanctions against the repressive Myanmar regime have not worked and that a new approach is needed.

"What such a new approach would mean in terms of Taiwan is not at all clear. ...

"Observers say there will be no return to the Taiwan policy of Clinton's husband and former president, Bill, many of whose policies were distasteful to Taiwanese as he pushed to improve relations with China amid strained cross-strait relations.

"But Obama's administration is piled high with former Clinton administration Asia policy stalwarts, who presumably hold much the same ideas they did when they helped establish that earlier policy. One would hope that they have matured since then.

"Taiwan and the world have yet to see what the current president, and the current State Department under Clinton, have on their plate as they decide on actions crucial to the fate of Taiwan and its people. Stay tuned."

YOUNG